

From bean to cup and beyond: exploring ethical consumption and coffee shops

Ferreira, J. & Ferreira, C.

Published PDF deposited in Coventry University's Repository

Original citation:

Ferreira, J & Ferreira, C 2018, 'From bean to cup and beyond: exploring ethical consumption and coffee shops' *Journal of Consumer Ethics*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 34-47.

ISSN 2515-205X

Publisher: JCE

This is an Open Access article distributed under a reative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 international License (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

Copyright © and Moral Rights are retained by the author(s) and/ or other copyright owners. A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge. This item cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the copyright holder(s). The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

From bean to cup and beyond: exploring ethical consumption and coffee shops

Jennifer Ferreira¹ and Carlos Ferreira¹

¹ Centre for Business in Society, Coventry University, UK.

Abstract

The UK has developed a strong coffee shop culture, with a growing demand for coffee, increased consumption, and waste produced as a result. Discussions of ethical consumption of coffee have often focused on both the coffee supply chains and coffee consumption in general, rather than considering the coffee shop as the point where ethical choices can be made. This paper illuminates some of the complexities consumers face around ethical consumption in coffee shops. This is done by applying three lenses which help appreciate the choices consumers make: the business model of the coffee shops they choose (chains or independents); the ethical qualities of the actual coffee consumed; and the waste produced in the form of coffee cups and coffee grounds. The results demonstrate that consumers must navigate a plethora of unknowns when faced with each of these choices. These unknowns hinder ethical decision-making, suggesting that responsibility for addressing the various ethical issues facing the industry cannot be left to consumers alone. This indicates a need for joined up approaches to ethical consumption in the coffee industry, in which the various stakeholder groups focus on what can be done in the space of the coffee shop.

Key words: Coffee; Coffee shops; Consumption; Waste; Recycling; Reusing

Introduction

In the United Kingdom there were an estimated 22,000 coffee shops in 2016, roughly doubling over the previous decade (Allegra Strategies 2017). With around one in five people visiting coffee shops on a daily basis, they have become a staple feature of the modern retail consumptionscape. As a consequence of this growth, there has been an increased demand for the products served in these shops. Beyond coffee itself, these products include other hot and cold drinks, as well as a range of food options, in addition to the shop space itself. Such activity inevitably produces waste, from various types of packaging to used coffee grounds. This paper illuminates the variety of ethical choices that face consumers related to their choice of coffee shop, the coffee they drink, and the waste generated. In doing so, it seeks to question what constitutes ethical consumption in coffee shops, and how considerations of ethical consumption need to move beyond the issues of coffee traceability and origins, to broader issues of economic, environmental and social sustainability.

This contribution draws on analysis of interviews with coffee shop owners, which were conducted as part of a research project exploring how businesses and consumers in the coffee shop industry can engage in the circular

economy. These interviews are used to demonstrate how coffee shops have been negotiating some of the issues around ethical consumption. This is complemented by document analysis, and in particular the analysis of newspaper articles to assess the different perceptions around negotiating responsibility for ethical consumption choices. The paper suggests that to foster greater consideration of ethical choices by consumers related to coffee shop consumption, knowledge and awareness about coffee, its origins, the waste produced, and broader sustainability are necessary.

The paper is structured as follows. It begins with an overview of the trends in coffee and coffee shop consumption in the UK. This is followed by an overview of how coffee and coffee shops fit with discussions of ethical consumption. It then moves on to discuss different choices consumers make, including in terms of the coffee shops themselves, the use of disposable coffee cups, and coffee ground waste. These are used as three lenses to delineate some of the varied choices ethical consumers face.

Growth of the coffee shop industry

Coffee shops have become a ubiquitous presence in towns and cities of the UK, with over 22,000 in 2016, and predictions this could rise to 32,000 by 2025 (Allegra Strategies 2017). This growth has largely been driven by changing consumer trends, the impact of the recession, and growth strategies of chain and independent coffee shops (Ferreira, 2017). The market is dominated by three large coffee shop chains (Costa Coffee, Starbucks and Caffé Nero), but there are a number of rapidly growing smaller chains, such as Coffee #1, and a growing presence of independent coffee shops (Allegra Strategies, 2017). Alongside the mainstream coffee shops, increasing competition is emerging from fast food outlets, such as McDonald's with its McCafé range, and casual dining outlets such as Pret-a-Manger, which place a heavy emphasis on their coffee offering.

The growing presence of the coffee shop on the UK high street has been coupled with rising coffee consumption more generally (ICO, 2018). The majority of this coffee is still consumed in the home rather than in coffee shops, but many of the ethical considerations about coffee shop consumption also apply to home consumption. A key shift in UK consumption patterns has been a rising demand for freshly ground coffee, coffee of higher quality, and greater traceability of the origins of coffee, which has fuelled the growth of the specialty coffee industry in particular (Ferreira, 2017). Consumers have a variety of purchasing options, with coffees that are related to a number of different standards and certification schemes which seek to indicate a more ethical approach to coffee growing, from the well-known Fairtrade coffee to an ever-growing range of direct trade schemes. However, with growing criticisms of existing schemes, and the growing number of certification standards on offer, this can lead to confusion for the consumer about how ethical their coffee really is (Bray and Neilson, 2017).

While the consumption of coffee is an important element of coffee shop operations, the growing number of coffee shops is also related to the production of growing amounts of waste. It is estimated that each year in the UK 2.5 billion disposable coffee cups are thrown away, and that 500,000 tonnes of coffee grounds are produced as waste (House of Commons, 2018; Bio-bean, 2016). Given the environmental impact of this waste, these are two further areas where coffee shop consumers have the potential to make ethical choices.

The growth of the coffee shop industry has naturally led to increased consumption of a range of products and energy, and there is not enough space in this paper to explore them all; instead, it focuses on three areas – coffee shop choices, disposable coffee cups and coffee ground waste – as lenses to consider how there are a range of consumption choices facing consumers, and how knowledge and understanding of issues related to them has the potential to be a key driver in fostering ethical consumption.

The foundations of ethical consumption

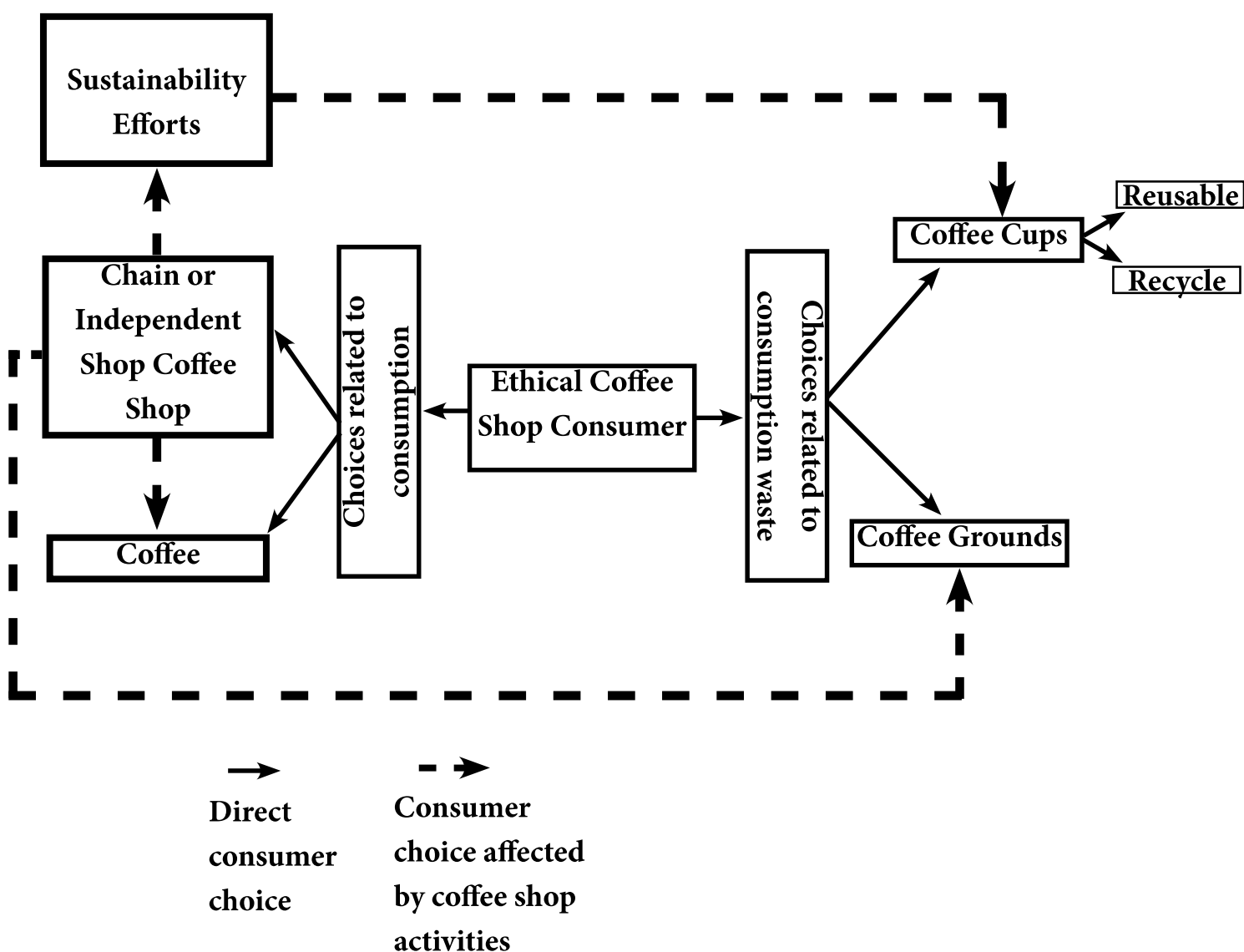
To consider ethical consumption in coffee shops, it's important to acknowledge broader notions of business ethics, particularly in retail. There has been extensive discussion over the definitions of ethical consumption (Lewis and Potter, 2011; Papaoikonomou et al. 2011), the politics of ethical consumerism (Barnett et al. 2011), the responsibility of consumers (Giesler and Veresui 2014), and the extent to which interventions in various forms can instigate new courses for action (Barnett, Clarke and Cloke, 2017). The notion of ethical consumption encompasses a wide range of practices, from the staunch anti-consumerist activist, which presents the reduction of consumption as the only ethical approach, to the accommodationist approach, where efforts are made to shift behaviours to include more sustainable and ethical practices (Lewis 2011). For some, ethical consumption includes the importance of practices related to sustainable consumption, while for others, ethical and sustainable consumption are different because sustainability objectives primarily seek to reduce resource intensity of production-consumption systems (Evans, Welch and Swaffield, 2017: 2). This paper assumes that elements of both are important for considering ethical consumption in coffee shops, in turn negotiating the economic, social and environmental impacts of coffee shop consumption.

In terms of the specific ethical issues affecting the coffee shop industry, much of the literature either focuses on Fairtrade coffee (De Pelsmacker et al. 2006, Lekakis 2013), or on boycotts based on the practices of coffee shops (Thompson and Arsel 2004). There is less discussion of the coffee shop consumer as a varied entity, who may seek to engage in ethical consumption practices in different ways. The concept of ethical consumerism has become mainstream (Barnett et al. 2011), with strategies such as Fairtrade relying on consumers as active agents, with the ability to 'make a difference' through their acts of consumption (Lewis 2011). As Lekakis (2015: 150) notes, "coffee politics have been increasingly interwoven not just with consumer culture, but also with the economics and development and the contentious politics of trade justice. The interplay between these traditions has resulted in the coffee commodity becoming a powerful object for ethical consumerism". Research has shown there is a diversity of coffee shop types targeting a range of consumer groups (Ferreira, 2017), indicating the existence of important consumption dynamics related to class, gender, geography and demography at play, which are likely to affect how ethical consumption choices are negotiated (Adams and Raisborough, 2010; Barnett et al 2005; Harrison, Newholm, and Shaw, 2005). Other factors which affect consumption dynamics include the urban location of many coffee shops and the targeting of middle class consumer groups in marketing messages. The coffee shop industry therefore provides a particular lens to explore a kaleidoscope of dimensions of ethical consumption.

The discussion above highlights that the coffee itself is just one element of how consumers can engage in ethical

consumption in coffee shops. The choices facing consumers around the choice of coffee shop, the coffee they drink itself, and actions taken around waste are summarised in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Coffee shop consumer choices



Source: authors

In theory, consumers should be able to make ethical choices in terms of coffee consumption itself, as well as in terms of the waste produced. However, as noted in Figure 1, many of the choices in terms of the ethics of coffee consumption are constrained by choices made upstream, by coffee shops. Direct consumer choice is limited to what shop to patronise – specifically the choice between chains or independent coffee shops – and to limiting waste from single-use coffee cups and from coffee grounds. The paper will now consider the coffee consumption and the consumption waste issues in turn.

Consumer action: ethical consumption in coffee shops

Beyond Fairtrade, or activism related to the coffee shop practices, there are many components which contribute to ethical consumption in coffee shops. Ethical Consumer devised a scorecard for ranking chain coffee shops on their ethical behaviour with scores given to a range of 23 features related to the environment, animals, people, politics and environmental sustainability (Ethical Consumer, 2015). Collectively this scorecard produces a score out of 20 with the highest score achieved by Soho Coffee Shops, Esquires Coffee Houses and AMT Coffee Shop with scores of 12, 10.5 and 9 respectively. The coffee shop market leaders had much lower scores, with Starbucks achieving one of the lowest scores, of 3 (Ethical Consumer 2015). The breadth of components included in this scorecard (from environmental reporting to workers' rights) highlights the range of potential components that help shape ethical consumption in coffee shops. While the informed ethical consumer may be aware of such ranking lists of coffee shops, the various components of this scorecard are not necessarily in the consciousness of the mainstream consumer, and so are unlikely to collectively impact on their daily decision-making processes; further research is necessary to understand the relative importance of such ethical consumption components.

Choice of coffee shop: Chains vs independents

The UK coffee shop industry is dominated by coffee shop chains, with the top three (Costa Coffee, Starbucks and Caff  Nero) representing around 53% of the branded coffee shop market alone in 2017, despite the continuing growth of independent coffee shops (Allegra Strategies 2017). For some consumers, the choice between a large corporate chain coffee shop and an independent one is in itself considered an ethical choice, based on the decision to support local businesses, and in doing so becoming 'conscious consumers' (Adams and Raisborough, 2010; McEachern et al 2010), making choices between cost (a higher price) and potential economic and social impact (Lee, Kim and Rha, 2017). This is often related to perceptions that to patronise a local independent coffee shop would have a more positive impact on the local economy, encouraging an element of individuality to remain in the locale rather than contributing to the spread of branded chain stores and the development of 'clone towns' (Dobson, 2015; Hubbard, 2017). In addition, there is a growing awareness that large corporations do not always contribute to social good. For example, some of the coffee shop chains have received negative media attention for their tax avoidance; in 2012 this led to a series of consumer boycotts on Starbucks (BBC News 2012). There has also been active resistance against coffee shop chains expanding in some towns and cities: Costa Coffee in Totnes (Urquhart 2012) or Coffee #1 in Warwick (Warwick Courier 2016) are just two examples.

Most coffee chains seek to advertise their efforts in ethical activity and sustainability, with dedicated areas of their websites and throughout shops. This does not however mean that smaller independent businesses are not acting with these issues in mind. Interviews with independent coffee shop owners in the UK indicated that issues of sustainability and ethical consumption were often at the forefront of their business models. Independents often tried to differentiate themselves from the chains coffee shops by making visible effort to use local goods, reduce waste etc, but they did

not have the marketing resources of larger businesses to spend time advertising this to consumers. One area where independents felt they could really make consumers aware of their business ethos was on the coffee they served.

Choice of coffee: Seeking ethical coffee

Like most areas of ethical consumption there are various perspectives about what makes coffee ethical, ranging from ensuring fair working conditions to workers, to a focus on the importance of sustainable farming practices. There are various ethical accreditation schemes and concepts seeking to certify the ethical credential of coffee, the most common of which are outlined in Table 1. Each has its own specificities about how it contributes to more 'ethically' produced coffee. Some focus more on the environmental impact, while others give more weight to issues such as workers' rights or living conditions. It has been argued that Fairtrade has become an integral part of ethical consumption (Lekakis 2015: 149), and while it is a common scheme, it is not without its critics (Doherty et al. 2013). Each of these schemes have their advantages and disadvantages (Neilson, 2008), but their very presence provides the consumer with even more ethical choices when frequenting a coffee shop, although more research is needed to understand if any of these labels are more effective in shaping consumer choices. In addition to the schemes outlined in Table 1, many coffee businesses have their own Fairly Traded Schemes. These are schemes which are not certified but often operate on similar principles, but are designed to remove the administrative and other challenges associated with the schemes outlined in Table 1.

With a plethora of schemes, certifications and independent arrangements for purchasing coffee, this can often lead to confusion for the consumer of what really is 'ethical' coffee, particularly given that the impact of coffee certification programmes on the livelihoods of farmers has been variable (Bray and Neilson, 2017). While Fairtrade is a widely known label, there has been significant criticism of its model. Furthermore, since it only operates with co-operatives it excludes all the independent small holder coffee producers, which dominate in the specialty coffee industry (Neilson, 2008; Sylla, 2014). For a consumer seeking to make a choice to consume more ethical coffee, there is now a multiplicity of labels to look for. In addition, while some coffee shops may explicitly advertise their efforts in this area, others, may not.

The choice of coffee shop and coffee consumed are just two areas of ethical consumption related to coffee shops; another focuses at the other end of the supply chain after the point of consumption to consider the waste producer, which this paper will now consider.

Table 1: Selected coffee standards and certification programmes

Programme	Features	Issues
Fair Trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To achieve certification producers are required to meet specific labour, environmental and production standards. • Certified producers are guaranteed to receive a Fairtrade minimum price for coffee which aims to cover the costs of production. • Additional Fairtrade Premiums received by producer organisations are used to invest in business or community improvements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns that the premiums were still not enough given the changing prices of coffee to cover production. • Concerns that the premiums are not reaching the farmers. • Only certain types of growers can qualify for certification (have to be a member of a cooperative). • Quality of Fairtrade coffee is variable. • The level of administration and record keeping is required is considered a burden and process is expensive.
Rainforest Alliance¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To achieve certification producers are required to meet specific environmental, social and economic criteria. • Criteria are designed to protect biodiversity, deliver financial benefits to farmers and promote decent working conditions. • Encourages sustainable farming methods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doesn't offer a minimum or guaranteed price to producers so doesn't reduce precarity of farmers. • Has been criticised for certifying products which contain low proportions of certified content.
UTZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To achieve certification producers are required to meet specific environmental agricultural practices to support productivity and sustainable production, as well as social requirements to improve lives of farmers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doesn't offer a minimum guaranteed price to producers so doesn't reduce precarity of farmers. • Some criticisms that their standards for certification are too low.
Organic Certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers undertake a number of practices to ensure crops are grown to organic standards which focus on health, ecology, fairness and care • Certified organic coffees tend to achieve higher prices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental impact of organic farming has been questioned because of reduced yields which means they are more carbon intensive. • There is debate around the nutritional benefits of organic food.
4C (Common Code for the Coffee)	<p>Stakeholders involved in coffee industry can become members of 4C association which has a code of conduct for sustainability standards. Introduces baseline criteria for the sustainable production, processing and trading of green coffee and eliminates unacceptable practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on improving farming practices providing a support network to training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core focus is on farming practices. • Does not specify a premium for coffee. • Membership fees.

¹ In 2018 Rainforest Alliance and UTZ certification program merged to combine expertise on conservation that drives responsible supply chains and expertise in bringing sustainable value chains to scale, with plans to publish a new certification programme in 2019 that will involve a new fee structure and labelling policy for certified products (Rainforest Alliance 2017).

Programme	Features	Issues
Direct Trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coffee roasters buy straight from coffee growers to removing middle organisations such as exporters, or certification scheme providers. • Designed to foster mutually beneficial relationships between roaster and producer where roaster can have more control over aspects that affect the quality of coffee, or other social and environmental aspects of the coffee growing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doesn't require any certification of standards. • Relationships are built on trust. • While some relationships may provide some financial security if roaster guarantees a minimum price, but this is not a requirement. Each trading relationship between roaster and farmer will be different.

Choice of disposal: Reducing waste across the coffee drinking experience

It is estimated that in the UK 2.5 billion disposable coffee cups are thrown away each year (House of Commons, 2018). The polyethylene layer in many disposable coffee cups means they cannot be recycled in standard facilities, and as of 2017 there were only three facilities in the country that could process them. As a result, the majority of disposable coffee cups were still reaching landfill, despite consumers placing them in recycling bins (House of Commons, 2018). This issue entered into the mainstream media in 2016 when celebrity chef and food waste activist Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall turned his attention to coffee cup waste, challenging the big three coffee shop brands to address the issue. The initiative generated significant media coverage, and some changes did take place. These included coffee chains pledging to recycle any coffee cups left at their premises, as well as various separate coffee cup recycling schemes. One example, 'The Square Mile Challenge' led by the environmental charity Hubbub in partnership with the City of London Corporation, Network Rail and employers and coffee shops in the City of London, aimed to recycle five million disposable coffee cups in a year through a local network of recycling points in the streets, across businesses and workplaces (BBC News, 2017).

In 2017, the UK government, via the Environmental Audit Committee launched an inquiry into the use of disposable packaging (focusing on plastic bottles and disposable coffee cups) (Parliament 2017). The Committee report highlighted the scale of the issue, implications for the environment and economy, how there have been misconceptions around existing recycling practices, as well as making suggestions for action in three areas (House of Commons, 2018). First, around clearer consumer messaging on recyclability of cups to reduce consumer confusion. Second around producer responsibility for packaging disposal, with the recommendation that Government should introduce different fees associated with different types of cup depending on their recyclability. It was suggested increased revenue from some types of cups should be used towards more recycling facilities and the UK's 'binrastructure' for dealing with such waste. Related to this, it was suggested there should be a target for all disposable coffee cups to be recycled by 2023, and if this was not achieved to ban their use completely. The third area was around reducing consumption and recycling, encouraging the culture of the reusable coffee cup, and a recommendation to introduce a 25p tax on disposable cups, to

be paid by the consumer, with this money being used to fund recycling infrastructure and public awareness campaigns around reducing littering and recycling.

Reactions and responses to the report were mixed. There was a concern that the voices of independent coffee shops were not represented in this inquiry (United Baristas, 2018), with many responding online to the report that the introduction of such a tax would be damaging for their business, particularly smaller businesses which rely on a large takeaway customer base. Others argued they have been attempting to encourage increased use of reusable cups for years, but the interest from consumers has been minimal, and they were unsure if a tax would be enough to induce a behavioural shift. Many argued that they felt they should not have to introduce discounts for using a reusable cup, in part because it would damage their income, but also because it was felt consumers should be taking some responsibility for the waste they produce without needing a financial incentive.

Many coffee shops chains were already developing their activities around recycling of coffee cups and attempting to encourage greater use of reusable coffee cups at the time of the report's launch: Costa Coffee established a nationwide coffee cup recycling scheme, while Pret-a-Manger introduced a 50p discount for consumers with a reusable cup (Smithers, 2016; Pret, 2017). Since the publication of the report, many of the larger coffee shop chains have sought to be perceived as being active in tackling the packaging waste issue, looking beyond the coffee cups too, for example through schemes planned to install water refill points to try and reduce plastic water bottles (BBC News, 2018).

Consumers' responses to the report were mixed too. Analysis of comments responding to news articles on the so-called 'latte levy' from six mainstream newspapers indicated a number of viewpoints:

- People are spending too much money on coffee out of the home and should just make their own in the home/office.
- The responsibility (and therefore cost) should be with the coffee shops for choosing a cup that cannot be recycled, or with the manufacturers for producing such materials in the first place.
- Consumers should not be penalised with another tax.
- Happiness that reusable cup use might become more mainstream and more discounts might be in place.
- Confirmation of consumer confusion around recycling in the first place, highlighting how they were surprised that the cups they had been placing in recycling bins for years were not actually being recycled.
- It was the responsibility of local authorities to provide suitable recycling infrastructure so the cups would be recycled.

Much of the debate that has taken place in response to this report is about responsibility for this waste and whether this should lie with the consumer, coffee shops, or the manufacturers. In most cases, each stakeholder argues responsibility should be placed on another, or at least shared somewhat, and that government should have some role in ensuring this responsibility is addressed. Arguably the issue of coffee cup waste goes beyond coffee shops, with disposable cups being available in many circumstances, such as office meetings, conferences and others. Discussions around ethical and sustainable consumption of coffee need to address the different spaces where these goods are consumed, beyond the high street coffee shop, and into the places across everyday lives.

The issue around disposable coffee cups has become one of the most visible coffee shop waste issues, with much discussion in the media in 2017-2018, so it is likely to be one which consumers are most aware of. However, there are other ways in which consumers can consider waste produced in coffee shops – in particular how waste coffee grounds are used. It is estimated that the UK produces 500,000 tonnes of waste coffee grounds each year (Bio-bean, 2016). Many coffee shops offer free coffee grounds to consumers, which can be used for a number of purposes, most commonly in the garden. By doing this, they hope that the amount of waste which reaches landfill is reduced. However, interviews with coffee shop owners suggested that very often the coffee grounds were not taken.

On a smaller scale, there are various companies which have engaged in circular economy practices to develop innovative ways to use waste products. For example, Huskee Cup have created a range of cups that use the coffee husks in the creation of coffee cups (Huskee, 2017). In another case, a jewellery designer has created a collection of jewellery using coffee grounds (Rosalie McMillan, 2017). On a much larger scale, the company Bio-bean has pioneered the process of recycling waste coffee grounds into biofuels and biochemicals. Waste coffee grounds from coffee shops, offices, transport hubs and coffee factories are recycled into a number of products, from consumer-focused coffee logs (to be used in stoves), biomass pellets (for heating buildings), biodiesel and biochemicals (Bio-bean, 2017). Further research is needed to explore if concepts such as recycling of coffee grounds enters into the mind of consumers when making choices about which coffee shops they frequent, or more generally about coffee waste. As the scale of the waste collections from Bio-bean illustrates, ethical consumption of coffee reaches far beyond the coffee shop.

Investigating activities around disposable coffee cups and coffee grounds highlights the range of stakeholders which can have an impact on the sustainability of the coffee shop industry, from the coffee shops and consumers, to the cup manufacturers, waste management organisations and governments. Given the multi-stakeholder nature of these issues, it is likely that for changes in the industry to take place and be successful, effective partnerships and collaborations will be necessary. This has clearly been recognised by organisations across the coffee shop industry, many of whom have become involved in the Paper Cup Recovery and Recycling Group, a working group of organisations involved in the paper cup supply chain, established in 2014 to develop collection and recycling opportunities for paper cups, and to consider how to instigate more sustainable solutions (PCRRG, 2017). There is recognition from the industry that a joined-up approach to sustainability is needed from all stakeholders involved, and this extends to consumers too.

Questions remain around what actions are needed to make all stakeholders alter their behaviour to be more ethical. The final report of the Environmental Audit Committee inquiry into disposable paper cups suggests that a tax on such items is not necessary because there is enough activity taking place across the industry. This is despite evidence that similar taxes implemented elsewhere can be successful, such as the 5p charge on plastic carrier bags which reduced their use by 85% within six months of its introduction in 2015 (BBC News, 2016). Whatever actions are taken to address sustainability in the coffee shop industry, the issue remains of who takes responsibility, where behaviour changes are required, and who should absorb costs. Negotiating responsibility for ethical consumption across the coffee shop supply chain is an issue which requires further research to assess how the most effective changes can be made.

Conclusion

This paper suggests that ethical consumption in coffee shops necessitates the inclusion of issues around sustainability in the broadest sense, to consider not only the coffee consumed in coffee shops (and in other places too), but also issues around waste produced as a result of coffee shop consumption. It has highlighted three areas of potential for ethical consumption choices for coffee shop consumers, progressing beyond the more common discussions of Fairtrade and consumer boycotts. Consumers have the option of making ethical choices around the coffee shop they choose to frequent, the ethical nature of the coffee on offer, and then also around how some of the waste is treated in particular the disposable coffee cup and coffee grounds.

Through this discussion the paper sought to illuminate the variegated choices facing the consumer, as well as highlight how the responsibility for fostering such ethical behaviours does not always lie solely with the consumer. Efforts by businesses throughout the industry and policy makers are required to foster greater awareness of ethical consumption choices in the coffee shop industry – from incentives to use reusable cups, greater funding for awareness of sustainability issues, to consideration of the type of coffee served in a coffee shop. Given the scale of the coffee shop industry and its continued growth, consumer action has the potential to impact the way this industry operates, and the impact the industry has on society and the environment. More in-depth research is needed to consider consumer awareness of the various components of what constitutes ethical coffee shop consumption, how consumers navigate ethical choices in the coffee shop consumptionscape (and in food retail more generally), the extent to which it is possible for some of these choices to become part of mainstream consumer activity, and how different stakeholders in the industry negotiate responsibility for fostering ethical consumption choices.

References

- Adams, M. and Raisborough, J. (2010) Making a difference: ethical consumption and the everyday. *The British Journal of Sociology*. 61(2): 256-274.
- Allegra Strategies (2017) *Project Cafe 2017*. London: Allegra Strategies.
- Barnett, C., Clarke, N., and Cloke, P. (2017) 'Whatever happened to ethical consumption.' *Journal of Consumer Ethics*, 1:5-10.
- Barnett, C., Clarke, N., Cloke, P., and Malpass, A. (2005) 'Consuming Ethics: Articulating the Subjects and Spaces of Ethical Consumption.' *Antipode*, 37 (1), 23–45.
- Barnett, C., Cloke, P., Clarke, N., and Malpass, A. (2011) *Globalizing Responsibility: The Political Rationalities of Ethical Consumption*. London: Wiley-Blackwell.
- BBC News (2012) 'UK Uncut Protests over Starbucks "Tax Avoidance"'. *BBC News*, 8 December. Available at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-20650945
- BBC News (2016) Plastic bag use plummets in England since 5p charge. *BBC News*, 30 July. Available at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-36917174

- BBC News (2017) 'Coffee cup recycling scheme launched in City of London.' *BBC News*, 3 April. Available at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-39479006
- BBC News (2018) Plastic bottles: free water refill points rolled out to cut waste. *BBC News*, 25 January. Available at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-42808302
- Biobean (2016) Bio-bean: About us. *Bio-bean*. Available at: www.bio-bean.com/about-us/
- Bray, J., and Neilson, J. (2017) 'Reviewing the impacts of coffee certification programmes on smallholder livelihoods' *International Journal of Biodiversity Science, Ecosystem Services & Management*, 13(1): 216-232.
- Clarke, N., Barnett, C., Cloke, P., and Malpass, A. (2007) 'Globalising the Consumer: Doing Politics in an Ethical Register' *Political Geography*, 36 (3), 231-249.
- De Pelsmacker, P., Drisen, L., and Rayp, G. (2006) 'Do Consumers Care about Ethics? Willingness to Pay for Fair Trade Coffee.' *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 39 (2), 363-385.
- Dobson, J. (2015) *How to save our twon centres: a radical agenda for the future of the high streets*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Doherty, B., Davies, I., and Tranchell, S. (2013) 'Where Now for Fair Trade?'. *Business History*, 55 (2), 161-189.
- Ethical Consumer (2015) Ethical Shopping Guide to Coffee Shops. *Ethical Consumer*. Available at: www.ethicalconsumer.org/buyersguides/drink/coffeeshops.aspx
- Evans, D., Welch, D., and Swaffield, J. (2017) 'Constructing and Mobilizing "the Consumer": Responsibility, Consumption and the Politics of Sustainability'. *Environment and Planning, A* 1-17.
- Ferreira, J. (2017) 'Cafe Nation? Exploring the Growth of the UK Cafe Industry'. *Area* 49, (1), 69-76
- Giesler, M. and Veresui, E. (2014) 'Creating the Responsible Consumer: Moralistic Governance Regimes and Consumer Subjectivity'. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 41 (3), 840-857.
- Harrison, R., Newholm, T. and Shaw, D. (2005) *The Ethical Consumer*. London: Sage.
- House of Commons (2018) Disposable Packaging: Coffee Cups. *House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee*. Available at: publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmenvaud/657/657.pdf
- Hubbard, P. (2017) *The Battle for the High Street*. London: Palgrave.
- Huskee (2017) *Huskee: Meet Huskeecup*. Available at: www.huskee.co/
- ICO (2018) *World. Coffee consumption*. London: International Coffee Organisation.
- Lee, J., Kim, H. and Rha, J. (2017) 'Shopping for society? Consumers' value conflicts in soially responsible consumption affected by retail regulation'. *Sustainability*, 9:1968, DOI:10.3390/su9111968
- Lekakis, E. (2015) 'Reading between the Digital Lines: The Political Rhetoric of Ethical Consumption' in: R. Hariman and R. Cintron (eds) *Culture, Catastrophe, and Rhetoric: The Texture of Political Action*. London: Berghan Books.
- Lekakis, E. (2013) *Coffee Activism and the Politics of Fair Trade and Ethical Consumption in the Global North*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lewis, T. (2011) 'The Ethical Turn in Commodity Culture: Consumption, Care and the Other'. *Književnost I Kultura*, 1 (7)

- Lewis, T. and Potter, E. (eds.) (2011) *Ethical Consumption: A Critical Introduction*. London: Routledge.
- McEachern, M., Warnab, G., Carrigan, M. and Szmigin, I. (2010) Thinking locally, acting locally? Conscious consumers and farmers market. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 26: 5-6: 395-412.
- Neilson, J. (2008) 'Global Private Regulation and Value-Chain restructuring in Indonesian smallholder coffee systems'. *World Development*, 36 (9): 1607-1622.
- Papaoikonomou, E., Ryan, G., and Valverde, M. (2011) 'Mapping Ethical Consumer Behavior: Integrating the Empirical Research and Identifying Future Directions'. *Ethics & Behavior*, 21 (3), 197-221
- Parliament (2017) Coffee Cups and Plastic Bottles: Disposable Packaging Inquiry. Available at: www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/environmental-audit-committee/inquiries/parliament-2015/inquiry4/
- Pret (2017) How can Pret encourage more customers to bring a reusable cup? *Pret*, 6 December. Available at: www.pret.co.uk/en-gb/how-can-pret-encourage-more-customers-to-bring-a-reusable-cup
- Rainforest Alliance (2017) Q&A on the UTZ/Rainforest Alliance Merger. *Rainforest Alliance*. Available at: www.rainforest-alliance.org/faqs/rainforest-utz-merger#why-merge
- Rosalie McMillan (2017) *Rosalie McMillan: Java Ore Lookbook*. Available at: www.rosaliemcmillan.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/RosalieMcMillan_Lookbook_Aug15v2_LowRes.pdf
- Smithers, R. (2016) Costa Coffee launches in-store cup recycling scheme. *The Guardian*, 26 November. Available at: www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/nov/26/costa-coffee-launches-in-store-cup-recycling-scheme.
- Sylla, N. (2014) *The Fair Trade Scandal: Marketing Poverty to Benefit the Rich*. Ohio: Ohio University Press.
- Thompson, C. and Arsel, Z. (2004) 'The Starbucks Brandscape and Consumers' (Anticorporate) Experiences of Glocalization'. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32 (3), 631-642.
- United Baristas (2018) 'Wasting Less: But We're Still Left Wanting More from the Proposed Latte Levy'. *United Baristas*. Available at: blog.unitedbaristas.com/wasting-less-but-were-still-left-wanting-more-from-the-proposed-latte-levy-c489bb71267b
- Urquhart, C. (2012) 'How Totnes Won Fight to Keep Costa out of Town'. *The Guardian*, 28 October. Available at: www.theguardian.com/business/2012/oct/28/totnes-costa-coffee-high-street
- Vaughan, A. (2016) 'Switch Disposable Coffee Cups for Reusables, Urge Campaign Groups'. *The Guardian*, [online] 29 September. Available at: www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/sep/29/switch-disposable-coffee-cups-for-reusables-urge-campaign-groups
- Warwick Courier (2016) Petition Launched against 'coffee Shop Warwick' - *Warwick Courier*. Available at: www.warwickcourier.co.uk/news/petition-launched-against-coffee-shop-warwick-1-7483027.
- Whelan, T., Newsom, D. (2015) Sustainable Coffee Farming: Improving Income and Social Conditions Protecting Water, Soil and Forests. *Rainforest Alliance*. Available at: www.rainforest-alliance.org/sites/default/files/2016-08/sustainable-coffee-farming-report.pdf

Biographies

Dr Jennifer Ferreira is a researcher in the Centre for Business in Society, Coventry University. Taking an interdisciplinary approach her research interests focus around the global development of the coffee and coffee shop industries, as well as the economic, social and environmental impacts of these industries. Her current research projects investigate the coffee shop industry and the circular economy, and the transformation of coffee cultures around the world.

Dr Carlos Ferreira is a researcher at the Centre for Business in Society, Coventry University. His research focuses on how people, ideas, technology, data and power come together to produce the modern economy – or how they fail to do so. His current research analyses these issues in a number of specific contexts, including: sustainable and inclusive economic development; markets for biodiversity offsets; and digital business models.

For Citation

Ferreira, J. & Ferreira, C. (2018) From bean to cup and beyond: exploring ethical consumption and coffee shops. *Journal of Consumer Ethics*, 2(2):34-47.

License Information

This is an Open Access article distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

ISSN 2515-205X